DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 370 196 EA 025 828

AUTHOR Dellar, Graham B.
TITLE Implementing School Decision-Making Groups: A Case Study in Restructuring.
PUB DATE Apr 94
NOTE 25p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 4-8, 1994).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Decentralization; Educational Environment; Foreign Countries; *Organizational Change; Organizational Climate; *Program Implementation; *School Based Management; *School Restructuring; Secondary Education
IDENTIFIERS *Australia

ABSTRACT

In 1987, Western Australia implemented a school-based management program called "Better Schools," which attempted to create "self-determining schools." Central to the restructuring effort was the establishment of school-based decision-making groups (SBDMGs), which permitted school staff and community representatives to exercise more autonomy over decisions concerning educational policy and school development. This paper describes the response of a secondary Australian school to the mandated establishment of SBDMGs and school development planning, with a focus on the implementation process. Data were derived from document analysis, observations, surveys, and interviews with Ministry of Education officials, superintendents, principals, deputy principals, and key representatives from the Parents and Citizens Association and the Teachers' Union. Findings indicate that schools are open social systems composed of a complex pattern of relationships, and that the change process must be viewed as dependent on context. Problems encountered during implementation of the "Better Schools" program included uncertainty about the policy's organizational fit, conflicting information sources used by principals and parents, a lack of collaboration among stakeholding groups, and staff resistance. The appendix contains a detailed case study of Jardine Junior High School. Contains 26 references. (LMI)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED 370 196

# Implementing School Decision-making Groups: A Case Study in Restructuring

Graham B. Dellar ©
Faculty of Education
Curtin University
Perth, AUSTRALIA

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
G. Dellar
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Paper prepared for presentation at the Annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), New Orleans, April 1994.

EA 025 828



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

**Background and Rationale**

Over the last decade many Central Education Authorities in Australia, New Zealand, Britain and the United States have embarked on a process to devolve decision-making and to establish school based management within their respective schooling systems. In Western Australia a far-reaching restructuring program titled "Better Schools" (1987) was launched to transform a highly centralised government school system through the creation of "self-determining schools". In character, this program comprised what Rice & Rogers (1980) termed a "loose bundle of components including strategic planning, and site funding which signalled a number of changes to the organisational and administrative practices of schools. Central to the restructuring endeavours was the establishment of school-based decision-making groups (SBDMG's). These groups were to serve as the basis of an approach to school-based management that permitted school staff and community representatives to exercise more autonomy over decisions concerning educational policy and school development.

At the individual school level, the responses to these substantial and complex change endeavours ranged from reluctant adoption through resistance to subversion of the restructuring program. Some five years after the initial pronouncement of "Better Schools" progress towards the establishment of self determining schools has been erratic. In June 1993 the Ministry of Education released a discussion document designed to rekindle debate on school-based management. "Devolution: the Next Phase " (1993) raised a number of issues concerning the nature of site based management. Central to these issues was the enhanced role of the School Decision-making Group in the selection of the Principal and the determination of the staff profile of the school. The release of this discussion document led to renewed concern by educators and the teachers' union about the implications for such changes on the nature of schooling and terms and conditions of their employment. As was the case with the initial announcement of "Better Schools" industrial action followed.

Many of the continuing difficulties in affecting implementation of restructuring policies appear to stem from a poorly conceived or non-existent plans for the management of reform. Critically, such an approach to policy implementation indicates a lack of understanding about the nature of the change process within educational settings by those with the responsibility for formulating the policies and implementing change.

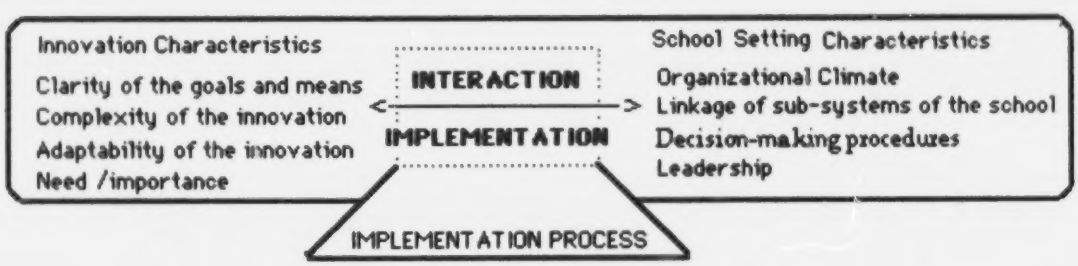
The purpose of this paper is to present a detailed account of the response of one secondary school to the mandated establishment of school decision-making groups and school development planning. By so doing, it is hoped the portrayal will illuminate the dynamics of policy implementation and promote a better understanding of complexities of change. Such insights into the realities of restructuring and reform might and led to more sensitive and informed actions by both policy makers and implementors alike.

**Theoretical Perspectives**

In the 1980's literature concerned with planned educational change suggested the process is more complex and dynamic than previously thought; subject to the influence of many factors over a long period of time. This realisation led researchers to consider not only the characteristics of the innovation itself but also contextual explanations of the total change process. For instance, Crossley (1984), found political factors warranted special attention. He suggested that change is a politically charged issue and the continuity of an educational policy is highly dependent upon political continuity and stability. From this "macro" implementation perspective researchers have advocated more focus be given to policy instruments such as incentives, funds, mandates and regulations to ensure change. Other researchers such as Huberman (1983) and Fullan (1985), have advocated focusing on the local or "micro" implementation process. Here the change process is viewed as being influenced by the social or cultural characteristics of the setting. From this perspective, change involves alteration to the cultural context, to the beliefs and practices of its members, and to relationships among people within the organisation targeted for change. In short, change can be seen as the creation of a new setting. Given the above two foci, it seemed appropriate to encompass both research approaches by adopting a more holistic perspective on the policy implementation process. That is, a perspective that would give attention to the macro and micro implementation concerns and the connections between them.

**Research Approach**

It was within this holistic framework, that a research study was undertaken to critically analyse the adoption and implementation process as it unfolded in three secondary schools. The study assumed that the processes of school organisational change involved the interaction of an innovation with a particular school setting. Specific attention was given to the nature of the policy innovation (school-based decision-making groups); the nature of the characteristics of the school organisation; and the interactions between the policy and the setting characteristics. Variables distilled from the literature on educational change formed a conceptual frame to guide data collection. These variables are represented in Figure 1.




4

**FIGURE: 1**

**Interaction Variables in the Organisational Change Process**

Specific data collection and analysis techniques varied. In examining the nature of the innovation(the Better Schools' Programme), policy statements and related Ministry of Education documents were analysed, along with press extracts from a range of associations that outlined their respective views on the proposed restructuring endeavour. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Ministry of Education officials who were either directly involved with the development of the Better Schools' Policy or had responsibility for overseeing its implementation. In addition, similar semi-structured interviews were held with the key individuals that represented Parents and Citizens Association, the Teachers Union, Superintendents, Principals, and Deputy Principals. Both documents and interview transcripts formed the main data source for analysis of the implementation events.

In order to gain an adequate understanding of the change process at the school level, complex data of different types needed to be collected from a number of different sources, hence a multi-instrument approach also formed the basis of data collection at this level. While the primary data source was derived from interviews of participants involved in the change process, additional techniques including non-participant observation, questionnaire/ surveys, content analysis of printed documents such as policy statements, and observations of planning meetings, were used. While detailed portrayals of the implementation events were distilled to capture the complexities of the change at each school, this paper examines the implementation processes occurring at one of them. Rather than incorporating the portrayal in the main text, the case study of Jardine Senior High has been included as an appendix to this paper. The reader is urged to review the case-study material before the discussion and conclusion sections. By so doing, better insight into the dynamics of the implementation process might be gained.

**Discussion**

There are a number of factors concerning the restructuring process emerging from this research that prompt consideration by all players involved in such complex organisational changes. Generally these factors concern the nature of the policy innovation, the nature of the adopting organisation and the dynamic nature of the implementation process itself. While the limitations of a single case are recognised, it hoped that the insignts and findings of this study will have transfer value for similar school settings undertaking restructuring and reform.

**Characteristics of the Better School's Policy Program**

Of critical concern to both Ministry and school-level personnel appeared to be the difficulties in discussing elements of the Better Schools Program, such as school-based decision-making groups and school development plans, when the actual form and substance of these initiatives was still in its evolutionary state. Data indicated that only limited discussion about the purposes or substance of the intended changes took place between stakeholders. Staff and parents of the school indicated that the knowledge they held about the restructuring program was derived

largely from a cursory reading of the Better Schools document or from hearsay. As a consequence neither staff nor parents shared the Principal's understanding of the philosophy of the Better Schools program. In the absence of such shared understanding there emerged a degree of cynicism about the change and resistance to its implementation by school staff. Many staff suspected that there was a hidden agenda to the changes. Indeed many staff held the view that the Better Schools Program was a politically and economically inspired change program. The benefits, especially the educational benefits for students, staff and the school as a whole, appear not to have been effectively communicated by the Ministry of Education or the Principal.

**Characteristics of the School**

The level of preparedness and capacity to implement restructuring and reform seemed dependent on a set of prevailing organisational characteristics of the school. These characteristics include the existence of a good organisational climate, strong sub-system linkage, administrative decision-making based on collaboration, an open relationship between the school and its community, and school leadership.

A favourable organisational climate reflects a high degree of professional involvement among staff, strong peer cohesion, the existence of participatory decision-making throughout the school and a high level of support for innovation and change. Data supports the assertions of Huberman & Miles (1984) and Fullan (1985) that good organisational climate is related to the extent of a school's receptivity to an innovation and subsequently the school's capacity to engage in the implementation process.

When examining the relationship between the organisational climate of a school and the policy innovation under study, an implementation dilemma became apparent. The innovation is an organisational change that has the potential to dramatically improve the organisational climate of a school. Therefore the need for such a change appears strongest where a poor organisational climate exists. However, for the implementation of such an organisational change to be a successful one, there needs to be a sound organisational climate. That is, where the need for change is strongest, the preparedness and capacity to affect such change appears weakest. This dilemma might well be resolved through the use of change strategies that focus on improving elements of the organisational climate prior to implementation of an innovation.

Data also tends to confirm the view that the school organisation is comprised of a number of distinct sub-systems. Indeed sub-system linkage appears related to, yet distinct from the notion of organisational climate. Sub-system linkage appears to involve the extent to which the sub-systems of the school operate as an interdependent and co-ordinated whole. Where sub-system linkage is weak, as in the case of Jardine SHS, the sub-systems tend to operate largely independently of each other. In this school, teachers viewed the establishment of a

SBDMG as an administrative innovation and therefore of little significance to them. Consequently minimal interest was shown in participating in the implementation of SBDMGs. This finding lends support the assertion by Louis, Rosenblum & Moliter (1981) and Wilson & Dickson Corbett (1983), that the weaker the sub-system linkage the decreased likelihood of meaningful implementation. The organisational changes associated with the Better Schools Program appear to have the capacity to enhance sub-system linkage. However, as with organisational climate, the existence of weak sub-system linkages within a school suggests preparedness to undertake implementation will be reduced.

The existence of a collaborative approach to administrative decision-making appears strongly related to a positive receptiveness towards the implementation of SBDMGs. A lack of such participation in decision-making prevents the development of necessary skills among members of the school community to effectively contribute to the school-based decision-making process. Further, where limited history of collaboration in decision-making exists, the introduction of participation through a SBDMG marks a fundamental change to the existing decision-making procedures.

While such an innovation might be welcomed by many it might also be perceived as a threat to other members of the school community. Individuals in traditional decision-making positions in the school can experience a fear of losing power as they move form a traditional hierarchical, decision-making model to a collaborative model. Unaccustomed to sharing authority for decision-making, the Principal, Deputy Principals and even the executive of the P&C, understandably baulk at embracing an innovation that they perceive would reduce their authority position.

Associated with this finding is the importance of and established open relationship with the community. In this situation, the school administration and staff encourage parent input into a range of decisions affecting the school. At Jardine SHS, there existed a large formal Parents and Citizens Association with a long history of involvement in the life of the school. Such involvement was however, narrow and limited to fund-raising and operating the school canteen. Previous administrations had done little to broaden such functions or to invite more direct participation in decision-making at the school. Given that the policy on SBDMGs involved parent and community participation in school decision-making, the existence of a current parent/school partnership suggests it would be easier for the school to build or adapt such a relationship in order to implement a SBDMG.

Leadership, particularly the Principal leadership, appears to be an important factor influencing the schools preparedness to implement change. The data from this research suggests that the level of Principal commitment to the innovation affects not only their initial stance towards the

change, but the subsequent implementation action he or she is prepared to allow within the school. The Principal of Jardine SHS appeared to be a dynamic, entrepreneurial leader, determined to make change happen. He indicated a personal preference for a participatory approach to decision-making and consequently viewed the establishment of a SBDMG as an opportunity to make fundamental and far reaching changes to the school. As Miles, (1987) noted, the existence of relevant knowledge and skill associated with the change appeared to affect the Principal's preparedness and capacity to implement change. At Jardine SHS, the Principal had prior experience with the successful implementation of SBDMGs. However, his enthusiasm and prior knowledge resulted in an over zealous and eventually obstinate belief in the forced adoption of his own blueprint for change.

**Determining Goodness of Fit**

In analysing the school's response to the innovation, data indicate that a complex process of evaluation of the innovation was undertaken. It appears that participants used their knowledge about the existing characteristics of the school to make judgements about how well the establishment of a SBDMG would fit with the existing school organisation.

This initial evaluation of "organisational fit" appears more that just a simple cost-benefit type analysis of implementing the innovation. Judgements seem to have been less rational and influenced by a large number of related yet more problematic considerations. Issues such as the possibility for disruption to the existing authority relationships within the school, the impact of implementation of classroom processes, the impact on the school's relationship with parent groups and the school's capacity to resource and sustain the implementation process, all appeared to have played an important role in each school's determination of organisational fit.

At Jardine SHS there was a degree of uncertainty about the organisational fit of the policy innovation. Data indicated the Principal and staff were critical about several aspects associated with the innovation itself. First, Principal and staff were critical about the lack of clear statements about the innovation and its operational implications for the school. The Principal felt devolved decision making could be time consuming, complex and inefficient. Further, there was concern expressed that the introduction of participatory decision-making processes would necessitate the Principal, Deputy Principals, teachers, parent and community members adopting different roles and accepting new responsibilities. In short, the innovation required a major re-distribution of decision-making authority within the school. Among senior members of the school staff there was a view that parents and community members had limited interest in participating in school development policy issues. These senior staff also maintained that teachers were primarily concerned with the task of classroom instruction and held limited interest in matters concerned with school policy and administration. Therefore, they

questioned the need to introduce a fundamental change to the existing decision-making procedures at their schools.

Second, there was concern about the lack of resources to support implementation. Such resources included time. Time for staff to address the change process, time to collect ideas, time for training in new skills and release time for staff to participate in the implementation planning process. This concern about resources such as time appeared directly related to what Miles (1989) referred to as "organisational slack". Given that the Principal and staff were already grappling with a number of concurrent changes it was understandable that little resource surplus (organisational slack) existed to devote to the implementation of SBDMGs. Concern was also expressed about the appropriateness of District-Level assistance available to guide implementation.

**Implementation Actions**

A number of factors appear to be important in shaping implementation action among the most critical is the role adopted by the Principal. It was a Ministry of Education expectation that all Principals would "ensure" the implementation of SBDMGs. In short, Principals were to view themselves as key advocated and Ministry agents for change. Whether they held a personal conviction about the desirability of establishing a SBDMG or not, they were expected to demonstrate support and to facilitate the implementation process. The strategy of using the Principal as key advocate and change agent appears to be inappropriate for three reasons. First, because the statements of initiatives contained within the Better Schools Program lack clarity, it is possible that the Principal would translate the initiatives and then present to the staff and community members an interpretation that is in sympathy with their preferred outcomes. By so doing, biased or distorted communication can occur which would tend to reduce a shared understanding of the philosophy. Second, such an approach replicates and reinforces the top-down approach to change and can be met with as much resentment and resistance from staff as would a directive issued from the Minister of Education. Third, such a strategy appears to contradict the very philosophy of devolved decision-making that advocates the participation of staff and community members in the management of schools.

The importance of information in planning for implementation and the manner in which such information was communicated to members of the steering committee, played a critical role in determining the implementation events. Information concerning the establishment of SBDMGs stemmed from a number of sources and took different forms. Such information ranged from the "official" Ministry documents, through to statements issued from organisations such as the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations, (representing parent organisations), and the Teachers' Union. In addition, models of SBDMGs and development planning procedures also flowed into schools from other schools and interstate. The carrier or

communicator of the information appeared to influence the manner in which the members of the steering committee responded to the information. All official Ministry information was disseminated to the school and members of the steering committees via the Principal. This dissemination procedure permitted the Principal to screen and selectively communicate ideas to members of the steering committee. The Principal also used the "authority" of such Ministry information to direct the planning process. When staff or parents forwarded ideas about possible functions of the SBDMG that were contrary to those held by the Principal, the Principal would counter and limit such ideas with a general reference to "stated Ministry intentions".

The Principal at Jardine SHS relied heavily on information about SBDMGs obtained from his previous school. Such information in the form of "preferred model" were promoted and discussed in detail within the steering committee. Lack of consideration of alternative models or information related to SBDMGs prompted parent members of the steering committee to seek alternative information about the possible structure and functions of a SBDMG. This alternative information, especially that obtained from WACSSO, was used by parent members of the steering committee to support their views about the structure and function of a SBDMG and to oppose the Principal's model. Subsequent meetings became conflicted rather than collaborative, and lead to hostility and intransigence among members.

Clearly a range of alternative information sources about possible structures and functions of a SBDMG has potential to cause differences of opinion among steering committee members, however, it also holds benefits. Under an authentic participatory decision-making approach, the quality of decision outcomes depends upon the consideration of viable alternatives. Information about such alternatives must be accessible to all members. That is, information must be available to all and in a form that is useful to the decision-makers. Information flow to steering committee members needs to be multi-directional.

An important issue influencing the implementation process involved the impact a SBDMG posed to existing decision-making groups within the school. Where the proposed change involves a fundamental alteration to existing decision -making structures and procedure, conflict would seem inevitable. It is important that those with responsibility for implementation view conflicts as a normal part of the change process and not a cue to abandon implementation efforts. To minimise the degree of conflict three strategies might be considered. Firstly, the impact the change could have on the school as an organisation must be assessed. To do this information should be sought with regard to the existing formal and informal authority relationships of the school organisation. Secondly, potential conflicts prompted by implementation of the innovation should be identified. Thirdly, once alerted to the potential

conflicts, implementors should identify strategies that could be employed to resolve such conflicts and persist with the change effort.

**Maintaining momentum for change**

All participants in the change process need to recognise the difficulty faced in implementing far-reaching, fundamental organisational change while maintaining stability in the operations of the school. Clearly there are limitations to the number of changes that can be successfully implemented at any given time. Where the change is complex, there is critical need for ongoing support and assistance. Most importantly, time must be available for parents and staff to address the change process. As implementation planning is undertaken, all stakeholding groups within the school community need to be kept fully informed about issues discussed and decisions taken by the planning body. Such communication might help break a sense of isolation often felt by teachers and parents alike and may promote an ongoing commitment to the change.

The critical external intervention affecting the implementation process was the industrial action taken by the SSTU during the latter part of 1989. This action was to effectively bring to a halt the implementation of SBDMG. There appear several factors that prompted the Union to impose a ban on the implementation of SBDMGs and School Development Planning.

The first factor involves union concern over what it saw as inadequate consultation between the Ministry and the Union about the key aspects of the Better Schools Program. Isolated from a direct collaboration in the planning for implementation, the Union was forced to adopt a relationship based more on political negotiation that authentic participation.

There is a need for collaboration among all stakeholding groups when planning for the introduction of a major organisational change. The lack of such collaboration between the Central Education Authority, the Teachers Union, Parent and Community Associations and Professional Associations, can result in divergence of ideas concerning policy innovations such as SBDMGs and their implementation. Acting in isolation, each association or group can develop their own response to the innovation. This in turn can result in conflicting information about the policy innovation being disseminated to school communities. Such contradictory information in turn tends to heightened confusion and conflict at the school level. The achievement of a consensus among such stakeholding groups could alleviate the likelihood of political bargaining among interest groups, and facilitate the dissemination of common and consistent information about the organisational changes.

## Conclusion

Any change, be it a product or policy, is not introduced into a vacuum. Indeed, the data derived from the study confirms that view of Crossley (1984) and Huberman & Miles (1984) that schools are clearly open social systems. As social systems, schools are composed of a complex pattern of relationships. It is the nature of these relationships that forms the context in which implementation takes place. As open social systems, schools are not only exposed to ideas and information stemming from the "macro" change environment, but is also affected by political and ideological turbulence occurring within that environment.

Data indicate that in addition to the characteristics of the innovation, it is the nature of the context in which change occurs that exerts the most pronounced influence on the implementation process. The unique nature of a school's organisational characteristics appears to influence the change strategies employed, the range of information and assistance used, and must importantly, the degree to which members of the organisation will persevere with the implementation process. To gain an understanding of the dynamics and complexities of the implementation process, it seems essential to view change as context dependent. At both Ministry and school level, close attention needs to be given to the nature of the school as an organisation as well as the characteristics of its environment. Through such an approach to change, appropriate support and strategies might be developed that better facilitate the type of organisational transformation that is intended to promote school development and create "Better Schools".

## References


**Beazley, K. E.** (1984). (Chairman), *Education in Western Australia: Report of the committee of inquiry into education in Western Australia*, W.A. Government Printing Office.

*Better schools in Western Australia: A program for improvement.* (1987). Perth, W.A., Education Department.

**Crandall, D. P., Eiseman, J. W., & Louis, K. S.** ( 1986 ). Strategic planning issues that bear on the success of school improvement efforts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 22(3), 21-53.

**Crossley, M**. (1984). The role and limitations of small-scale initiatives in educational innovation. *Prospects*, *14*(4) 533-540

**Dellar, G. B. & Giddings, G.J.** (1991). *School Organizational Climate and School Improvement*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association(AERA) Conference, Chicago. April 1991.

*Devolution: The next phase. How far should we go?* (1993). A discussion document Perth: W. A., Ministry of Education.

**Firestone, W. A.** (1985). The study of loose-coupling. In A. Kerckoff. (Ed.), *Research in sociology of education and socialization*. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

**Fullan, M.** (1985). Change processes and strategies at the local level. *Elementary School Journal, 85* (3), 391-421.

**Huberman, A. M.** (1983). School improvement strategies that work: Some scenarios. *Educational Leadership, 11*, 23-27.

**Knezevich, S. J.** (1984). *Administration of public school education* (4th ed.). New York: Harper & Row.

**Louis, K. S., Rosenblum, S., & Molitor, J.** (1981). *Strategies for knowledge use and school improvement*. Washington: National Institute of Education.

*Managing Change in the Public Sector: A statement of the Government's Position.* (1986). Parliamentary White Paper Perth: Government Printer.

*School Development Plans and School-Based Decision Making Groups: Discussion Document.* (1988). Ministry of Education, Perth: W. A. Government Printer.

**Wilson, B. L., & Dickson Corbett, H.** (1983). Organization and change: The effects of school linkages on quantity of implementation. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 19*(4), 85-104.

**Wise, A. E.** (1983). Why educational policies often fail: The hyper-rationalization hypothesis. In J. Baldridge. & T. Deal. *The dynamics of orgainzational change in education* (Eds.). Berkeley, Cal.: McCutchan Publishing.

**Caldwell, B. J., & Spinks, J.** (1988). *The self-managing school*. East Sussex: The Falmer Press.

**Crossley, M**. (1984). The role and limitations of small-scale initiatives in educational innovation. *Prospects, 14*(4) 533-540

**Dellar, G. B. & Giddings, G.G.** (1991). *School Organizational Climate and School Improvement*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association(AERA) Conference, Chicago. April 1991.

**Dellar, G. B.** (1991a). *Policy Implementation as Interactive Modification*: Paper presented at the Western Australian Institute for Educational Research Conference, August 1991.

**Fullan, M.** (1985). Change processes and strategies at the local level. *Elementary School Journal, 85* (3), 391-421.

*Give teachers and students a fair go: A rationale for change.* (1987). Perth: W.A. Government Printer.

**Hall, G., Rutherford, W., Hord, S., & Huling, L.** (1984). Effects of three principal styles on school improvement. *Educational Leadership, 41*(5), 22-29.

**Huberman, A. M.** (1983). School improvement strategies that work: Some scenarios. *Educational Leadership, 11*, 23-27.

**McLaughlin, M.** (1976). Implementation as mutual adaptation: Change in classroom organization. *Teachers College Record, 77*(3), 167-180.

**Miles, M. B.** (1987). *Practical guidelines for school administrators: How to get there*, Unpublished paper .

**Nolan, J. (1987).** Better schools or not? *W.A.H.S.P.A. Newsletter, 11*(1), 10-17.

# APPENDIX

## CASE STUDY PROFILE : JARDINE S. H. S..

### The Nature of Policy Innovation

The notion of devolved decision-making and school development planning in Western Australian schools was first posited in the Beazley Report into Education (1984). However, particular impetus for restructuring can be linked to a comprehensive review of the public sector conducted by the Western Australian Government Functional Review Committee, in 1986 (White Paper: Managing Change in the Public Sector: 1986). Given that the Education Department employed some 22 000 persons associated with over 700 schools and colleges, and received a quarter of the State government budget, it was understandable if only from an economic perspective that an examination of the efficiency of the organisation was deemed necessary to make it more cost effective. Therefore while the restructuring initiatives reflected a philosophy of devolved decision-making and school self-determination, more important it represented a corporate managerialist vision for the school system. Hence the policy focus was fundamentally concerned with creating a more responsive, efficient and accountable education system.

Abstract in nature, the initial policy document entitled "Better Schools" contained only general information about the structure and functions of a school-based decision-making group. Further, apart from a broad time-line for change, there was little evidence of a considered plan for implementation across the system. This lack of specificity about the form(s) and functions of SBDMG's appeared to be an intentional feature of the policy. Given the range of school types and the diversity of both geographic and cultural environments throughout the state education system, a flexible policy would enable a number of organisational and administrative configurations to emerge that better reflected the uniqueness of particular educational settings. Wise(1983), described such educational change policies as "bundles of potentialities" or predispositions waiting to be defined at the local level. While such policy characteristics would seem desirable, the lack of clarity and specificity created a degree of uncertainty at both the macro and micro level, not only about the critical features of SBDMGs' but also about how to proceed with the implementation of the policy. In examining the change process at Jardine Senior High School attention is given to the initial response of the school to the Better Schools program and the subsequent issues and actions that occurred as implementation process unfolded. However, before doing so it is important offer a brief overview of the setting characteristics and organisational attributes of the adopting school.

### The Nature of the Adopting School

Jardine is a harbour site school located within the urban precinct of Perth that , for the purposes of this study has been named Firstown. Firstown serves a diverse community that is primarily comprised of people residing in the older suburban districts of Firstown. Traditionally, the Firstown community has been considered working class. Most residents were employed by the Firstown Port Authority as wharf workers or worked in any of the numerous light industries associated with the export or import of products through the port. Additionally, a thriving fishing industry continues to provide employment for Australians and increasing numbers of Italian, Greek and

Portuguese immigrants. Over the last decade, the community has undergone a subtle change in character. The population has been aging and as a consequence the school has experienced a gradual decline in student enrolments. Another noteworthy change has occurred in the culture of the community. In the 1980's many affluent, educated people were attracted by the cosmopolitan nature of Firstown. The city's historic buildings, and the advantages of inner city living have enticed many people into the area and its surrounding suburbs. Old terrace housing and the compact workers' bungalows have been revamped and restored to serve as homes for these new "urban elite". As the Principal [Patrick] notes:

> T4 (a) 171 ...Firstown is unique in that it does have different type of population than the normal sort of suburb. There is a large number of what might be termed alternative lifestyle people . This group is made up, in the main of highly educated and academic people. They just happen to be unconventional and in some respects non-conformist. (Patrick)

**School Relationship with its Community.**

According to the district Superintendent of Education, Jardine Senior High School is seen by the community as a strongly academic and prestigious school. Indeed there are many applications for student enrolment that come from other city suburbs as well as rural regions. Many parents see the academic emphasis of the school as most desirable, as the Deputy Principal Female [Trudy] indicated:

> They see the education programme as a means of getting their children to a tertiary institution. They emphasis this from the moment they walk in through the doors of the school until the time their child leaves. And any attempt made by the school to cut down on the old core areas [traditional subject disciplines] immediately causes alarm.... Our whole school programme reflects the expectations of the community that their children end up with a tertiary qualification.

Given such a perception it is understandable that community support for the school is most evident on issues concerning the academic progress of students. Open nights and teacher/parent contact evenings held following the distribution of student reports are always well attended. Apart from such events, parents and other members of the community have little involvement with the school.

A few parents are actively involved in limited school issues through membership of the long established Parents and Citizens Association [P&C]. This association has responsibility for running the school canteen and organising fund-raising activities for the school. According to both the Deputy Principals and senior teachers, the P&C is a strong body exerting a deal of influence over the capacity of the school to raise monies and allocate funds raised. The lack of broad community representativeness of the P&C, and the independent way it operates in raising and allocating funds is viewed with some concern by both the Principal and the Deputy Principals:

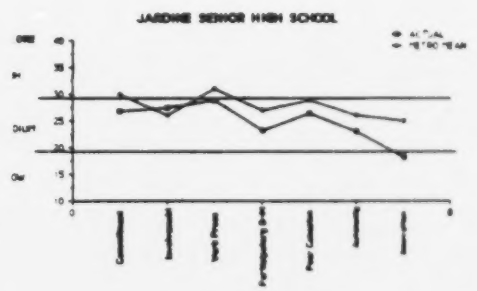
> There is a minority group within the P&C that do the work. What tends to happen is that P&C members speak to staff. Staff

then organise the fund-raising event and as a result we can rise $10.000 -12.000 something like that but we don't get full representation of parents, it is a small group say 20-30 people only. (Trudy)

Jardine Senior High School was opened in 1956 and was one of the first of the large government secondary school to be established in the state. In 1989 the school had a student population of just over 1000 students and a staff of 78 . The school occupies a large expanse of evaluated ground with magnificent views to harbour, river and ocean. The building design is typical of many of the schools of that era. Rows of classrooms on two levels form a parameter around two open quadrangles. The larger quadrangle doubles as student recreation area and an informal assembly area. Unfortunately, many of the original buildings are not well maintained. However, the degenerating condition of the classrooms is more a testament to lack of adequate maintenance funding by the Ministry of Education, rather than misuse by students. Several staff were of the opinion that the Ministry was considering the sale of the school site to realise the enormous real estate value of the land the school occupied. Such views were not only fuelled by the limited expenditure on building maintenance but also by the rumour that a new university is to be established in the area and there has been interest expressed in acquiring the school site from the Ministry.

**School Organisational Climate**

In order to gain an insight into the prevailing organisational climate of Jardine SHS the School Organisational Climate Questionnaire (Dellar & Giddings, 1991) was administrated. The resulting data along a number of scales the climate was poor. Specifically, staff perceived that there was only a moderate degree of participation in decision-making at the school and that the administration exerted limited control over their professional conduct. The lowest mean scores were recorded for the innovation scale suggesting little emphasis was placed on adopting new approaches or changing existing practices within the school. The following graph shows the school organisational climate for Jardine at the commencement of the 1989 school year.




**School Sub-system Linkage**

Sub-system linkage refers to the extent to which sub-systems within a school are interdependent or operate separately from each other. According to Wilson Dickson Corbett (1983), and Crandall, Eiseman & Louis (1986) tightly linked sub-systems increase the likelihood of effective implementation on organisational changes. In order to assess the degree of sub-system linkage at Jardine SHS a questionnaire derived from the work of Wilson & Dickson Corbett (1983) and Knezevich (1984) was

administered. Resultant data indicated that linkage was weak. In particular there was little whole school commitment, limited cross department association and weak linkage between the administration and the classroom domain. This questionnaire data is supported by both observation field notes, and interview transcripts. As one senior master noted:

> ... the contact between several different departments is not strong. For example one could say that the social studies department removes itself from the staff-room at lunchtimes ...so contact tends to be a little disjointed in that way. There is no animosity, no unpleasantness but people are a little more isolated as groups. (John)

> ...It is a school where almost everything is left to run by itself, there is very little overall co-ordinated leadership from the top. (Terri)

> This school has been running for thirty-two years on a departmental line and everyone is fairly well entrenched. Some of the senior staff have been at this school directing their departments for 22-23 years. (Mervin)

**Decision-Making Procedures**

The decision-making procedures in existence at the commencement of the 1989 school year had, according to staff, been in operation for many years. The main decision-making group consisted of the Principal, the Deputy Principals, and senior members of staff. Infrequently, general staff meetings were held to permit involvement of classroom teachers. However, according to many staff, real decision-making, if it occurred at all, rested with the Principal and the Deputy Principals, particularly the Deputy Principal Female.

> The history of decision-making ...[laughter]. Until this year we would have a staff meeting and we would talk about something, and we would often defer making a decision until the next staff meeting. So everyone would go away and promptly forget about the issue. Then you would come back and have to vote, and someone would say something and then it would go to the senior staff meeting. It would end up that nothing would get done anyway. That was the impression that most staff had about school decision- making. Decisions were put off being made, that they weren't made. Decisions that could be made at a general staff meeting could be thrown out the very next week at a senior staff meeting. So there was a feeling that 'what is the point of discussing anything or making a decision' because most of the time nothing ever comes of it anyway. (Candy)

With the arrival of the new Principal, changes were made to the membership of the senior staff meetings. All Year co-ordinators, special group co-ordinators and representatives from other areas (who are not designated subject area heads), were no longer entitled to attend or participate in the senior staff meetings.

> are waiting to see what happens with the new Principal. Most people...I am most impressed by the fact that senior staff meetings have been cut down; not the frequency of the meeting but the number of people who attend ..so you have the actual senior staff [heads of subject areas]. I am also impressed that we get the minutes promptly after the meetings and it seems that these meetings are much more business like, not so unwieldy, that a decision *is* made about something. (John)

While the Principal, Deputy Principals and senior staff together constituted the administrative decision-making group, authority and responsibility for particular decisions is divided among members of this group. Decisions concerning finance and annual budget requirements, communications with the community, press and Ministry remain the prerogative of the Principal.

**Leadership**

As incoming Principal, Patrick recognised the problems confronting many new senior administrators. He spent some time describing the dilemma and suggesting two possible approaches he might adopt.

> I don't know whether to take a "boots and all" approach to this role or to play it easy and get more of a feel for the place. (Patrick)

He explained that the staff seemed anti-change, and that he had been informed there were individuals who had obstructed change efforts undertaken by the previous administration. He described a small group of people who had been at the school for some time and had *"their own agendas"*. Patrick felt power struggles were occurring between some members of the senior staff and what he termed the *"senior administration"* [Principal and Deputy Principals]. One individual he identified as posing a derisive threat had been given extra responsibilities to *" get him on side"*. However, Patrick was still not too sure whether this action might not cause resentment among other senior staff members and result in the creation of a new group to undermine his authority.

This understandable pre-occupation with establishing his leadership role within the school meant that for most of the first semester his attention was given to in-school issues he considered warranted priority. This is not to imply that Patrick did not hold long-term goals for the school. He expressed the view that he wanted to make Jardine Senior High a show school, one that might attract community and Ministry of Education interest. He recounted the long history of Jardine Senior High School and expressed a personal desire to create a school that was more akin to those of the private school system.

**Preparedness of Organisational Change**

The traditional and conservative nature of the school has meant adherence to an academic programme and daily teaching procedures that have largely remained unaltered since the 1970's. When asked if the school was one open to new ideas and change, a typical teacher's response was:

> Oh no! No it has been very much the other way. Every thing is done the way it has always been done...very much that way. (Candy)

The belief that the main task of the school is to

prepare students for tertiary education has, according to members of both the administration and many teachers, resulted in a cautious and somewhat negative response to any proposed change. As the Deputy Principal states:

> There is a deal of resistance. Over the years the school has been organised into subject departments and each operates more or less independently. So if you want change you have to somehow get around this difficulty. This is why I think we need to alter the Senior Master system to change the school system. They protect their department and their job and will resist change that will effect their positions. (Mervin)

The preservation of what one subject department head referred to as a stable *state* should not be taken as an indicator of total school resistance to change. Several staff members suggested that the lack of change, particularly concerning curriculum issues, is the cause of a deal of frustration. For such staff, hope is placed on the capacity of the new Principal to stimulate change and ensure that new initiatives can be undertaken.

**Perceptions About the Importance of Restructuring**

The Principal viewed the changes associated with "Better Schools" as inevitable, reflecting a world-wide trend towards the devolution of decision-making in schools. Such a trend reflected fundamental change in society, particularly Australian society, where the community was demanding more say in educational issues.

> With these new concepts about education for a school to have an effective environment it has to adopt democratic process and participatory decision-making. If the school doesn't I think it will alienate itself from society and the community it serves. (Patrick)

Consequently the Principal saw several advantages in establishing a SBDMG. The first concerned the advantage of generating more active participation among staff in the life of the school.

> I think that it is a good move for the school because is will enable cross fertilisation of ideas between departments and this will rejuvenate the school. (Patrick)

A second advantage concerned the benefits of shared responsibility for administrative decision-making, particularly for the Principal.

> The advantage of a school based decision-making group being involved in development planning is that it can move the responsibility for decisions away from the chief executive to other groups in the organisation. For a start the principal can say, well it is not my plan it is the councils plan or the staff's plan", or some such thing. (Patrick)

The positive views of the change were not shared by other members of the administration, particularly both Deputy Principals. They saw the change as unnecessary and disruptive. As Trudy [Deputy Principal female] states:

> To me this is seen as just one more interruption

> I think that staff feel that they don't really need to involve themselves in this. Provided that the place runs smoothly they are quite happy for us to make decisions up here without being involved. (Trudy)

Responses from many staff members across teaching areas suggested most staff viewed the change as inevitable. However many staff expressed disinterest in becoming directly involved with the change. As one member of the senior staff put it:

> Well I think that there is an element of "Oh! here we go again" ...One has to say I think that there is an element of apathy about it. Some people have other priorities and so on but I do think that when it becomes a reality there will be a different attitude taken towards it. But I do think that at the moment there is a suspicion that it is the Ministry shunting it's responsibility onto schools and not being terribly interested in what such a SBDMG might do. (Robert)

This lack of enthusiasm among staff was seen by the Deputy Principal male as a direct consequence of the change overload being experienced due to the number of concurrent changes emanating from the Ministry.

> Staff see the policy on School Based Decision-Making and School Development planning as just one more Ministry initiative to contend with at a time when there are too many concurrent changes occurring. (Mervin)

**Complexity and Organisational Fit**

It was the perception of the members of the administration that establishment of a SBDMG would result in a fundamental and radical change to existing decision-making procedures, particularly because of the loosely linked pedagogic sub-system of the school and the corresponding lack of any collaborative approach to decision-making. As the Principal stated:

> I think I may have mentioned before that older schools such as Jardine are very faculty-orientated. They have a long history of operating like that. The incumbent Senior Masters and Mistresses have been here for a long time and this means that to establish a participatory decision-making process will require a complete re-organisation of the way the school is operating. (Patrick)

The Principal viewed such a re-organisation as a very complex process, one that would necessitate dramatic changes to the relationships the members of the school held with one another. Further, since the existing P&C had functioned mainly as a fund-raising body, parental participation in the policy formulation of the school would mark a dramatic change in the relationship the school held with its community.

**Anticipated Problems**

For the Principal, the main problem in establishing a SBDMG concerned overcoming resistance among staff, particularly senior staff who were not convinced of the need for their active participation in school administrative issues.

> In this school there is going to be a lot of resistance (and rightly so I think) to any move to influence directly

> the curriculum in any subject area. There may even be resistance to any move that changes the composition of the curriculum; that is the amount of time spent on particular subjects. (Patrick)

The Principal saw the causes of resistance stemming not only from the conservative and traditional nature of the existing subject dominated organisational structure, but also from a lack of understanding of the philosophy underpinning the change.

> ...That is something that is very obvious and it is one of the problems . They [the staff] have to be informed. They don't understand the importance of the corporate model of management. They don't understand the basis of the decision to go this way. They don't understand how it is intended to operate. (Patrick)

Both Deputy Principals expressed concern about the proposed structure and function of a SBDMG. However, the arguments offered were themselves contradictory. For example Trudy suggested that an SBDMG might not be truly representative of the whole school community.

> I am terribly frightened that with a small group there is no real whole-school representation and students will miss out. I don't think that students will get an equal vote, despite that fact that they are there. I think that you can intimidate students. It could be done behind the scenes very easily. They could be lobbied and you will not get a fair representation. (Trudy)

At the same time, Trudy expressed concern that a SBDMG containing representatives of students and parents would result in such representatives determining school policy and affecting the operations of the school.

> Also Parents and student members could combine like a block to outvote staff as well. Further the right of appeal seems to go to the district superintendent and the Principal didn't have any say. The superintendent could come back to the Principal and say "re-write your constitution or re-write your school development plan", and the Principal might not have been in agreement with the plan when it was first produced and that seems to be a weakness with the approach. Members are not appointed they are elected, voted in so the Principal looses virtually all control. (Trudy)

Several staff interviewed also saw potential problems emerging. Among them was concern that the SBDMG would be perceived as a threat to the existing P&C and result in conflict between the school and P&C members. Further concerns were expressed about the lack of teacher support for, and participation in, a SBDMG. And finally, many staff saw an empowered SBDMG exercising an unwelcome influence over the curriculum and teaching issues. Such concerns are expressed in the following response from a senior member of staff.

> Yes I see problems with it ...I hope that staff will get involved ..that worries me. I'm certain that there will be some problems with

> the P&C simply in terms of persuading them to see that it might not be the monster that destroys everything that they have ever done. ...Beyond that I can't see too many more problems, although there are always things lurking in the background ...the sort of things that people warn you about such as the question of a SBDMG involvement in the area of curriculum [that's become an issue]. Is the SBDMG going to start banning books and that sort of thing? Beyond those fairly limited worries I don't think there will be too many problems. (Robert)

**Implementation Actions**

At Jardine SHS the strategy employed to plan for implementation involved the formation of a planning group or steering committee. This committee was comprised of representatives drawn from the school staff and parents. Its brief was to formulate guide-lines for the structure and functions of a SBDMG and to consider ways in which the school might establish such a group. The philosophy of "self-determining schools" that underpinned the Better Schools Programme, combined with the abstract wording for the initiative on SBDMGs, suggested steering committee members would have large degree of freedom to determine the form and functions of their SBDMG. Indeed, the absence of prescription and clarity in the wording about SBDMGs appeared an intentional strategy by the architects of the innovation to permit flexibility at the school level. In this way individual schools could develop decision-making groups that were appropriate to their particular contexts.

Guided by the philosophy of "self-determining schools" the Principal initially gave members of their steering committees latitude to translate and adapt the innovation to match the needs of the school. During the planning process, key members of the committee focused not only on the Better Schools statement about SBDMGs, but also on what Fullan (1982) referred to as "situational knowledge". That is, knowledge about the characteristics of their school and its community. Against such knowledge participants attempted to determine what were the desirable characteristics of a SBDMG for their particular school.

External assistance in form of the School Development Officer (SDO) was available to the committee however, no prior working relationship existed between the SDO and the school hence no professional credibility of the SDO had been established. Indeed, the Principal and senior staff expressed little confidence in the SDO's capacity to offer meaningful and practical assistance. The SDO was viewed as a seconded "classroom teacher", possessing limited expertise at facilitating change. Such a perception appeared fostered by informal information that the role of the SDO was still evolving and that they had received very limited training at the District Office. It appeared that the effectiveness of any assistance provided by an SDO depended on the "natural" talents of role occupants. Consequently, the Principal and steering committee members at Jardine SHS made limited use of such District level assistance.

The implied freedom for individual schools to translate and adapt the policy on SBDMGs (that is, to be self-determining) was soon curtailed by the issuing of more prescriptive Ministry of Education

guide-lines on implementation. In the latter half of 1988 a variety of documents concerning the implementation of the Better Schools Programme were disseminated to schools. These documents were designed to clarify for school community members, the Ministry's position on, and recommendations about, such issues as the establishment of SBDMGs.

With the commencement of the 1989 school year, the Ministry of Education increased pressure on schools for the establishment of SBDMGs and School Development Plans. Increasingly it became apparent to the Principal that the Ministry intended the SBDMG play a more critical role in the process of school development planning than first indicated. Further, the District Superintendent and School Development Officer constantly reminded the school about the Ministry implementation time-line that proposed all schools have a SBDMG in place by the end of semester one 1989. The new Ministry documents created a sense of urgency to make a concerted effort to establish SBDMGs that would fulfil the Ministry requirements. Because the committee had already begun to frame their own guide-lines, the emergence of new discussion documents and statements forced the committee to review and reinterpret their guidelines against the structure and function being "required" of them by the Ministry or Education and to determine how such a decision-making group might be best "installed" in the school.

Despite the rhetoric of devolved decision-making, the very notion of "self-determining schools" appeared to be illusory. The Ministry of Education appeared to be delimiting and pre-determining the nature and extent of change occurring at the school level. In reality, the Better Schools Programme appeared aimed at the creation of self-managing schools rather than self-determining schools. Principals were being encouraged to become corporate managers and schools were being required to establish mechanisms that would enable them to be more efficient and accountable organisations. Under such changes the authority to make critical educational policy would remain with the Ministry of Education and not in reality be devolved to schools.

As the implementation planning process progressed the confusion resulting from the often contradictory information about SBDMGs and School Development Plans prompted the Principal to play and increasingly dominant role. While there might have been a number of reasons for Principal intervention in the process, what was evident at Jardine SHS was the Principal's lack of opportunity to adequately assess the unique characteristics of his new school, therefore it would seem unlikely that he acted to established a SBDMG that matched the particular needs of the school community. Indeed the Principal openly promoted his vision about the structure and function of the SBDMG. Guided by a desire to shape the outcomes of the steering committee planning process, the Principal paid little attention to the establishment or maintenance of collaborative group processes instead he introduced a preferred model of an SBDMG and attempted to control the flow of information to the group.

The importance of information in planning for implementation and the manner in which such information was communicated to members of the

steering committee, played a critical role in determining the implementation events. Information concerning the establishment of SBDMGs stemmed from a number of sources and took different forms. Such information ranged from the "official" Ministry documents, through to statements issued from organisations such as the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations, (representing parent organisations), and the Teachers' Union. In addition, models of SBDMGs and development planning procedures also flowed into schools from other schools and interstate. All official Ministry information was disseminated to the school and members of the steering committees via the Principal. This dissemination procedure permitted the Principal to screen and selectively communicate ideas to members of the steering committee. The Principal, used the "authority" of such Ministry information to direct the planning process. When staff or parents forwarded ideas about possible functions of the SBDMG that were contrary to those held by the Principal, the Principal would counter and limit such ideas with a general reference to "stated Ministry intentions". As information about the possible functions of the SBDMG became known, concern grew among members of the steering committee about the possible loss of decision-making authority of existing groups such as the P&C and senior staff bodies. Parents, feared their support for the Principal's "model" would result in the demise of the school's P&C. Subsequently, parent members sought information from WACSSO about alternatives to the proposed SBDMG. This information was used to oppose the adoption of the Principal's "model" and to preserve the decision-making authority exercised by the existing P&C. Subsequent meetings became conflicted rather than collaborative, and lead to hostility and intransigence among members.

**Waning Staff Support for Change**

For many of the teaching staff the tentative initial support for the principle of participatory decision-making began to wane. Emerging guide-lines about the structure and function of SBDMGs indicated the necessity of increased teacher participation in the school development planning process. By mid- 1989, many teachers were expressing the view that their primary and most important role was concerned with classroom teaching, not participating in administrative decision-making. It was argued that committee meetings would take teachers out of classrooms, affect the time they had for preparation and marking, and disrupt the education of students.

Informal interviews across the school indicated a growing concern among teachers that main purpose of the organisational changes was the installation of accountability mechanisms in schools. It was feared that such mechanisms could reduce the professional autonomy of teachers. In addition, teachers indicated that there were too many concurrent changes confronting them and that they had been provided with limited or totally inadequate support to enable adequate implementation to be undertaken. To be required to participate in the implementation of yet another change was viewed by many teachers as the "last straw". As Firestone and Corbett (1988) suggested, teachers saw participation in SBDMGs and School Development Planning as a cost rather than a benefit. At Jardine SHS the perception of change-related disruption had reached a point where many staff were openly promoting the outright rejection of any further change and a re-focussing on classroom and instruction issues.

Even the Principal seemed to have become less enthusiastic about the change. Not only was he faced with the growing discontent among school community members, but they were also being confronted by a fundamental change to their role from one of "educational leader" to "corporate manager". This was a role change he did not appear to welcome. Clearly the Principal was facing a real dilemma. Given the deteriorating organisational climate of the school, persisting with implementation plans was likely to threaten the stability of the overall educational operations.

**External Intervention**

The critical external intervention affecting the implementation process was the industrial action taken by the SSTU during the latter part of 1989. There appear several factors that prompted the Union to impose a ban on the implementation of SBDMGs and School Development Planning.

The first factor involves union concern over what it saw as inadequate consultation between the Ministry and the Union about the key aspects of the Better Schools Programme. While the Union was represented on early working parties associated with aspects of the Better Schools Programme, they took a contrary stance on several aspects of the Programme. At the end of 1987 the working parties were terminated, to be replaced by Ministry taskforces. Isolated from a direct collaboration in the planning for implementation, the Union was forced to adopt a relationship based more on negotiation that participation.

The second factor, involves the Union's concern about the impact implementation of the Better Schools Programme was having on the working conditions of its members. In response, the Union sought compensation via a fifteen percent salary package increase application for its members. When the package was rejected by the Ministry of Education the union issued a directive to all members to cease participation in the implementation of both SBDMGs and School Development Plans.

At Jardine SHS this industrial action brought to a halt all formal implementation planning. Steering committee meetings were abandoned and a small group of school personnel under the direction of the Principal formed to make decisions about school self-management. The impact of such industrial action on the implementation process demonstrates how susceptible the implementation process in government schools can be to external political interventions.